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background notes

Afghanistan

United States Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs

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DEPOSITORY

Official Name: Democratic Republic of Afghanistan

PROFILE

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*—Afghan(s). **Population** (1985 est.): 11 million (plus about 2.7 million refugees in Pakistan and 1 million refugees in Iran and the west). **Annual growth rate:** Negative because of war. **Density** (est.): 17.3/sq. km. (42.31/sq. mi.). **Ethnic groups:** Pukhtun/Pushtun (Pathan), Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, Aimaq, Turkoman, Baluch, Nuristani. **Religions** (est.): Sunni Muslim 80%, Shi'a Muslim 20%. **Languages:** Dari (Afghan Persian), Pushtu. **Education:** *Years compulsory*— 6 yrs. *Literacy*—less than 10%. **Health:** *Infant mortality rate* (1979 UN est)—181.6/1,000 live births. *Life expectancy* (1985 UN est)—36.6 yrs. (male); 37.3 yrs. (female). **Work force:** Number cannot be estimated due to fighting; mostly agricultural and rural.

Geography

Area: 647,497 sq. km. (260,000 sq. mi.); about the size of Texas. **Cities** (1985 est.): *Capital*—Kabul (2 million). *Other cities*—Kandahar (126,100); Herat (118,600); Mazar-i-Sharif (113,000). **Terrain:** Mostly mountains and desert. **Climate:** Dry, with cold winters and hot summers.

Government

Type: Afghanistan calls itself a "democratic republic." **Independence:** August 19, 1919.

Organization: The Revolutionary Council, headed by a president, is the supreme governing body. Cabinet members (Council of Ministers) are nominally responsible for the day-to-day operations of various ministries, but key policy decisions are made in the Politburo and Secretariat of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). A pervasive Soviet advisory presence affects all ministries and decisionmaking bodies.

Political party: The PDPA—only party permitted to function openly.

Flag: Adopted in April 1981, the flag has three horizontal black, red, and green stripes, with an emblem in the upper left corner. The emblem consists of an arch and a pulpit arrayed against a green background; an open book; sun rays and heads of wheat; black, red, and green ribbons; and a 5-pointed star.

Economy

GNP (FY 1985 est.): $3 billion. **Per capita GNP** (FY 1985 est.): $273. **Inflation rate** (1983-84 IBRD est.): 20%.

Natural resources: Natural gas, oil, coal, copper, talc, barites, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron, salt, precious and semiprecious stones.

Agriculture: *Products*—wheat, corn, barley, rice, cotton, fruit, nuts, karakul pelts, wool, mutton.

Industry: *Types*—Smallscale production for domestic use of textiles, soap, furniture, shoes, fertilizer, and cement; handwoven carpets for export.

Trade (1984 est.): *Exports*—$778 million: carpets, rugs, fruit and vegetables, natural gas, cotton, oil-cake, karakul. *Major markets*—Soviet Union, India, Pakistan. *Imports*—$902 million. *Major suppliers*—Soviet Union (57%), Eastern bloc, Japan, Iran, India.

Official exchange rate (IMF 1985): 55.0 afghanis = US$1.

Economic aid and credits received. *Total*—more than $3.1 billion since 1950, principally from USSR/Eastern bloc. *US aid*—$500 million between 1950 and 1979.

Membership in International Organizations

UN and most of its specialized and related agencies, including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF); Asian Development Bank, INTELSAT, Nonaligned Movement, Colombo Plan, Group of 77.

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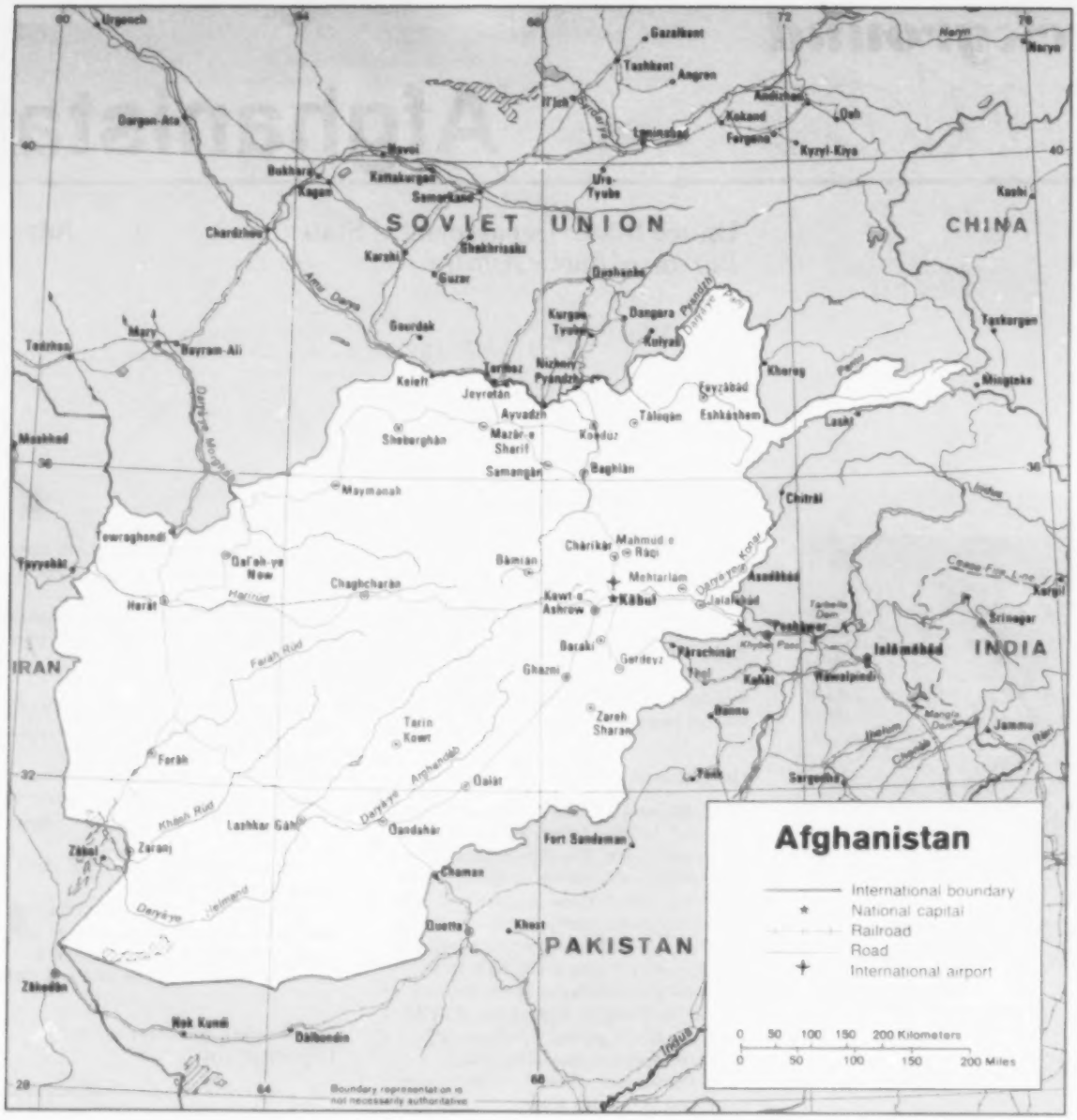
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Kowt-e Ashrow
Asadabad
Jalalabad
Peshawar
Parachinar
Srinagar
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Rawalpindi
Kohat
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Jammu
Sargodha
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Qalat
Qandahar
Lashkar Gah
Khash Rud
Zaranj
Fort Sandeman
Chaman
Quetta
Khost
Zahedan
Nok Kundi
Dalbandin
Indus
Jhelum
Chenab
Ravi

PEOPLE

Afghanistan's ethnically and linguistically mixed population reflects its location astride historic trade and invasion routes leading from central Asia into South and Southwest Asia. The Pukhtun (also Pushtun and Pathan), Tajik, Uzbek, Turkoman, Hazar, and Aimaq ethnic groups constitute the bulk of the Afghan population, with small groups of other peoples also represented. The dominant ethnic group, the Pukhtuns, make up about 40% of the population. Afghan Persian (Dari), spoken by a third of the population, and Pushtu, spoken by about half, are the principal languages, with Turkoman and Uzbeki spoken widely in the north. More than 70 other languages and numerous dialects are also spoken by smaller groups throughout the country.

Afghanistan remains a Muslim country. Eighty percent of the population are Sunni (Hanafi branch), and the remainder are Shi'a, including Isma'ilis, Hazaras, and the Kizilbash. The Nuristanis descended from the Kafirs, a group forcibly converted to Islam in 1895. Despite Marxist attempts to secularize Afghan society, Islamic practice still pervades all aspects of life, and religious tradition and codes provide the principal means of controlling conduct and settling legal disputes. Excluding small urban populations in the principal cities, most Afghans engage in agriculture and are divided into clans and tribal groups, which follow centuries-old customs and religious practices.

GEOGRAPHY

A landlocked country bordering the Soviet Union, China, Pakistan, and Iran, Afghanistan is divided from southeast to northeast by the towering Hindu Kush and Pamir mountain ranges. Small valleys made fertile by irrigation and snow-fed mountain streams intersperse the mountains and desert areas. The country's essentially dry climate is typical of central Asia's higher regions, with cold winters and hot summers. Characteristic of this climate is the range of temperature change within short periods, from season to season and from place to place. For example, a summer sunrise temperature in Kabul at 1,829 meters (6,036 ft.) of 16°C (60°F) may reach 38°C (100°F) by noon. The capital's mean January temperature is 0°C (32°F). A mere 144 kilometers (86 mi.) away in the lowland plains of Jalalabad (549 meters—1,812 ft.), summer temperatures often reach 46°C (115°F). Precipitation, most of which occurs between October and April, rarely exceeds 38 centimeters (i.e., less than 15 inches).

Afghanistan's principal cities are Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, and Mazar-i-Sharif. The smaller cities of Kunduz, Baghlan, and Pul-i-Khomri also have a modest industrial base. Their size is increasing slowly.

HISTORY

Afghanistan, often called the crossroads of central Asia, has had a turbulent history. In 328 B.C., Alexander the Great entered the territory of present-day Afghanistan, then part of the Persian Empire, and crossed the Helmand River to capture Bactria (present-day Balkh). His invasion was followed in succeeding centuries by those of the Scythians, White Huns, and Turks. In A.D. 642, Afghanistan was invaded by the Arabs, who introduced Islam to the area.

The Arabs quickly gave way to the Persians, who controlled the area until A.D. 998, when they were conquered by the Turkic Ghaznavids. Mahmud of Ghazni (A.D. 998–1030) consolidated the conquests of his predecessors and turned Ghazni into a great cultural center and base for frequent forays into India. Following Mahmud's short-lived dynasty, various princes attempted to rule sections of the country, until the arrival of the Mongols in 1219, who destroyed many cities, including Herat, Ghazni, and Balkh, and laid waste to fertile agricultural areas.

Following Genghis Khan's death in 1227, a succession of petty chieftains and princes struggled for supremacy until the late 14th century, when his grandson Tamerlane incorporated Afghanistan into his vast Asian empire. Babar, who descended from Tamerlane and founded India's Moghul dynasty, made Kabul capital of an Afghan principality. He is buried there in a simple but attractive garden.

Ahmad Shah Durrani founded modern Afghanistan in 1747. A Pukhtun, Durrani was elected king by a tribal council after the assassination of the Persian Nadir Shah at Khabushan in the same year. Durrani consolidated chieftainships, petty principalities, and fragmented provinces into one country. His rule extended from Meshed in the west, to Kashmir and Delhi in the east, the Amu Darya (Oxus) River in the north, and the Arabian Sea in the south. All of Afghanistan's rulers until the Marxist coup of 1978 were from Durrani's tribe, and, since 1818, all were members of that tribe's Mohammadzai clan.

European Influence

Collision between the expanding British and Russian Empires influenced Afghanistan significantly during the 19th century. British concern over Russian advances in central Asia and influence in Persia led to two Anglo-Afghan wars. The first occurred between 1839 and 1842 and is remembered today for the ferocity of Afghan resistance to foreign rule. The second (1878–80) also grew out of the "great game" of imperial conflict between Britain and Czarist Russia and was sparked by the Amir Shir Ali's refusal to accept a British mission in Kabul after previously receiving a Russian envoy. This conflict brought Amir Abdur Rahman to the Afghan throne. During his reign (1880–1901), the British and Russians together established the borders of what became the boundaries of modern Afghanistan, with the British effectively in control of Kabul's foreign affairs.

Despite German efforts to play on anti-British feelings and have the Afghans foment trouble along the borders of British India, Afghanistan remained neutral during World War I. Afghanistan's policy was not, however, universally popular within the country. Habibullah, Abdur Rahman's successor, was assassinated by members of an anti-British movement in 1919. His son Amanullah regained control of Afghanistan's foreign policy after launching the third Afghan war. During this conflict, the war-weary British gave up their rights after some early Afghan victories. The Afghans celebrate this event on August 19 as Independence Day. It commemorates the signing of the Treaty of Rawalpindi on August 8, 1919.

Reform and Reaction

King Amanullah, who assumed that title in 1923, moved to end his country's traditional isolation in the years following the third Afghan war. He established diplomatic relations with most countries and, following a 1927 tour of Europe and of Ataturk's Turkey, introduced several reforms, such as the abolition of the traditional Muslim veil for women and the opening of a number of coeducational schools. These measures quickly alienated many tribal and religious leaders which, with the deterioration of the army, made Amanullah easy

Travel Notes

Travel advisory: The US Department of State recommends against all travel to Afghanistan.

Climate and clothing: Kabul's climate is similar to Denver's, but drier and dustier. Winter lasts from December through February; summer, mid-May to mid-September. Because of cultural sensitivities, dress conservatively.

Customs: Entry and exit visas are required and are difficult to obtain, and visitors generally are not allowed to leave Kabul. Visas are sometimes issued for all modes of entry (land or air), sometimes for a single mode of entry. Immunization requirements change; check latest information.

Health: No health controls or sanitation regulations govern the safety of food in markets and restaurants. Travelers and foreign residents are advised to boil drinking water, cook fruits, vegetables, and meats thoroughly, and not to consume local dairy products.

Transportation: Bakhtar Aeroflot, and Indian Airlines provide international flights to and from Kabul. Taxis are available in Kabul; buses are often overcrowded and uncomfortable.

Telecommunications: International telephone calls may be placed, but they must be booked, often weeks in advance, and paid for in the Central Telephone Office, Kabul is 9½ hours ahead of eastern standard time. Commercial cables from the US may take 2–3 days to arrive.

prey for the Bacha-e-Saqao ("son of a water-carrier"), a brigand who captured Kabul, thereby forcing Amanullah's abdication in January 1929. Prince Nadir Khan, a cousin of Amanullah's, defeated the Bacha-i-Saqao on October 10, 1929. With considerable Pukhtun tribal support, he was declared King Nadir Shah. Four years later, however, he was assassinated by a fanatical follower of King Amanullah.

Nadir Khan's 19-year-old son, Mohammad Zahir Shah, succeeded to the throne. King Zahir Shah reigned from 1933–73 when his cousin, Sardar Mohammad Daoud—prime minister from 1953–63—overthrew the monarchy in a near bloodless coup. During his 10 years as prime minister, Daoud solicited both military and economic assistance from Moscow and introduced controversial social policies, including the abolition of *purdah*. Daoud's efforts to establish a Pukhtun state in the Pakistan-Afghan border area created years of tension with Pakistan and led eventually to his dismissal in March 1963.

King Zahir Shah promulgated a liberal constitution in 1964, providing for a two-chamber legislature to which the King would appoint one third of the deputies, the people would elect another third, with the remainder selected indirectly by provincial assemblies. Zahir's "experiment in democracy" produced few lasting reforms, but it permitted the creation of unofficial extremist parties of both left and right.

Daoud's Republic and the April 1978 Coup

Amid charges against the royal family of corruption and malfeasance and worsened economic conditions caused by the severe 1971–72 drought, former Prime Minister Daoud seized power on July 17, 1973, after a relatively bloodless military coup while the king was outside the country. Daoud abolished the monarchy, abrogated the 1964 constitution, and declared Afghanistan a republic with himself as its first president and prime minister. His attempts to carry out badly needed economic and social reforms met with little success, and the new constitution promulgated in February 1977 failed to quell chronic political instability. In addition, during this period the two factions of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), the Khalq, or people's party, and the Parcham, or flag party, ended their 10-year schism. On April 27 and 28, 1978, the united party initiated a bloody coup that overthrew Daoud, assassinated him and most of the ruling Mohammadzai family, and established the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. Nur Mohammad Taraki, secretary general of the PDPA, became president of the Revolutionary Council and prime minister.

Opposition to the Marxist government developed almost immediately; and, after a major revolt in Nuristan in the summer of 1978, it subsequently grew into a countrywide insurgency. Most Afghans opposed the imposition of a Marxist-style "reform" program which ran counter to their deeply rooted traditions. Differences between the PDPA's two factions also surfaced early and resulted in the exile, purge, or imprisonment of Parchami followers. By September 1979, a dispute between the two top leaders, Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, who had replaced Taraki as prime minister in March 1979, resulted in Amin killing Taraki and assuming complete power.

The Soviet Invasion

The Soviet Union quickly moved to take advantage of the April 1978 coup. In December 1978, Moscow signed a new Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness, and Cooperation with Afghanistan, and the Soviet military assistance program grew significantly. As the insurgency spread, and the native Afghan Army began to collapse, the regime's survival grew more dependent upon Soviet military equipment and advisers. This set the stage for the largest deployment of Soviet troops outside the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe since the end of World War II. On the night of December 24, 1979, large numbers of Soviet airborne forces began to land in Kabul. On December 27, they killed Hafizullah Amin and installed in his place Babrak Karmal, leader of the Parcham faction, who had flown into Kabul from the Soviet Union. Babrak was a member of the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan formed during the 1960s, and served in Parliament between 1965 and 1969. By the spring of 1980, Soviet troop strength in Afghanistan had grown to 85,000.

In the years since the invasion, the Soviets and the regime they maintain in Kabul have been unable to establish authority outside the capital city or otherwise to make good the Soviet conquest. Both Herat and Qandahar are substantially out of regime control. An overwhelming majority of Afghans oppose the communist regime, either actively or passively. Afghan freedom fighters, or *mujahidin*, remain active throughout the country, and regular fighting occurs in almost all 29 provinces, while the Afghan Army continues to disintegrate. Babrak Karmal's slender power base shrank until his fall from power in May 1986 and replacement by Najibullah, former chief of the Afghan secret police, or KHAD. Soviet failure to win a significant number of Afghan collaborators, or to reconstruct a viable Afghan army, has prompted them to bear an increasing brunt of the fighting and a large share of the responsibility for civilian administration. Despite Soviet efforts, the 120,000 troops now in Afghanistan maintain only a tenuous military standoff with the *mujahidin*.

Although the Soviets have failed to fashion an effective surrogate regime in Kabul, they are committed to this goal, as was underscored by Karmal's removal and replacement by Najibullah as PDPA General Secretary. Prior to Karmal's fall, indications of Soviet displeasure with the fortunes of his regime had mounted. These included relatively

direct criticism of Karmal in the Soviet press and other, less subtle signs, such as failing in April 1986 to receive Karmal officially while devoting noticeable attention to the Moscow visit of Prime Minister Keshtmand, a Shi'a from the Hazara region.

Najibullah established a reputation for grim, brutal efficiency during his tenure as KHAD chief. KHAD, by many accounts the regime's most effective institution, achieved a measure of success under Najibullah in sowing dissension among Pathan tribes along the Pakistan-Afghan border. Himself a Pathan, Najibullah will likely continue to make such activities a key part of his policy as he moves to consolidate the regime's authority. Najibullah's rise can largely be attributed to a Soviet desire to see party, government, and military policies more effectively implemented.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

The Afghan regime remains ineffective, with little future prospect of becoming a viable surrogate capable of standing on its own. The PDPA is riven by deep-seated divisions, which frequently erupt into violence. The dominant Parcham faction holds most state power, although its Dari-speaking, multiethnic, urbanized adherents still comprise only 40% of the party. It controls KHAD, the state security service, an important source of leverage. Presidents Taraki and Amin controlled the Khalq faction, which Interior Minister Gulabzoi now directs. Gulabzoi is a longtime rival of General Secretary Najibullah. Khalqis are mostly Pashtu speakers from eastern areas, often from a lower class or rural background. They predominate in the armed forces. In the past, the Khalqis had a reputation for being more radical and nationalist than the Soviet-sponsored Parchamis.

Regime efforts to broaden its base of support have not been successful. In 1981, it formed the National Fatherland Front, a popular front organization charged with bringing together various regime front organizations such as the Democratic Youth of Afghanistan, in a patriotic, nonparty context. In 1985, the regime, stung by criticism of its human rights record by the UN Human Rights Commission, tried to erect a facade of legitimacy by convening a *Loya Jirga*, or grand assembly of tribal elders. Most of the participants turned out to be regime functionaries. The remainder, or "independent" delegates, were reportedly paid well for attending. Local council elections in 1985 also had, from the regime's point of view, little positive effect, as did attempts that year to broaden the base of the ruling Revolutionary Council and Council of Ministers. Several "independent" figures brought into the two bodies turned out to have close ties to the regime.

Principal Government and Party Officials

General Secretary of the PDPA—Najibullah
President of the Revolutionary Council—Babrak Karmal
Prime Minister—Soltan Ali Keshtmand

Ministers
Finance—Mohammad Kabir
Foreign Affairs—Shah Mohammad Dost
National Defense—LTG Nazar Mohammad

Afghanistan maintains an embassy in the United States at 2341 Wyoming Avenue, NW., Washington, D.C. 20008 (tel. 202-234-3770/71/72).

ECONOMY

Agriculture

Although only 15% of its total land area is arable, Afghanistan is primarily an agricultural country. This sector employs three-quarters of the working population and accounts for more than half of the gross domestic product. Relatively little use is made of machines, chemical fertilizer, or pesticides. Wheat made up nearly half of all agricultural production before the war; this proportion has probably increased.

Afghanistan has had several good crops since the war began. Nevertheless, overall food production has declined recently, as a result of sustained fighting and of unusually low amounts of precipitation in 1984. Deliberate Soviet efforts to disrupt production in resistance-dominated areas also played an important role. Higher than average amounts of precipitation in late 1985 and early 1986 eased this situation, but the net effect of the war on food availability has been to wear away at the margin of agricultural production.

Since 1978, Kabul's population has possibly tripled as villagers flee heavy fighting that has destroyed homes, crops, and livestock. Farming on Kabul's fringes augments the city's food needs, sustained by imports from the Soviet Union.

(Photo by Steve Raymer, (c) National Geographic Society)

Isolated food shortages continue to exist, particularly in those areas where agriculture has been severely disrupted by the war, and are exacerbated by the poor transportation network. Food continues to be imported from both the Soviet Union and Pakistan, while traditional exports of fruit and vegetables have diminished. Although grain has replaced most cash crops in Afghanistan, opium, which requires little attention and is therefore safer to grow, is an exception. Opium production has increased since the war began.

Trade and Industry

The Afghan economy remains tightly tied to that of the Soviet Union, its largest trading partner, by the Soviets' monopolization of trade and development of industries with production oriented toward the Soviet economy. With the development of its natural gas fields in the north, Afghanistan's largest export has become natural gas, going exclusively to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is also the major importer of Afghanistan's second largest export, raw and processed agricultural products such as cotton, wool, oilseeds, dried fruit, and nuts. Before the Soviet invasion, the United States and the United Kingdom were the largest importers of Afghan karakul (Persian lamb) pelts. Western Europe, especially the Federal Republic of Germany, was the major importer of Afghan carpets.

For many years, the Soviet Union has been Afghanistan's principal supplier of capital goods, petroleum products, and sugar. Other suppliers, including France and the Federal Republic of Germany, have provided machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, petroleum products, and textiles. The most important U.S. exports to Afghanistan have been cigarettes, fertilizer, and used clothing but, since the Soviet invasion, trade between the two countries has fallen to a low level—in 1985 about $7.1 million in Afghan imports to the United States and $3.4 million in exports from the United States. The United States removed Afghanistan's most-favored-nation status in February 1986.

Transportation

Although Afghanistan has no railways or navigable rivers, the Amu Darya (Oxus) River on the Soviet-Afghan border does carry barge traffic. Since the 1979 invasion, the Soviets have completed a bridge across the Amu Darya, and a motor vehicle and railroad bridge has been completed between Termez and Jeyretan. A circular highway connecting the principal cities of Herat, Qandahar, Ghazni, and Kabul, complete except for the northern quadrant, comprises the primary road system. Most roadbuilding occurred in the 1960s, with the projects generally divided between the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) and the Soviet Union. The Soviets built the road and tunnel through the Salang Pass in 1964, connecting northern and southern Afghanistan. Roads today are generally in bad repair.

Bakhtar Airlines, the national carrier, links the major cities and towns and provides international jet service to Eastern Europe, India, and the Soviet Union. Indian and Soviet airlines also provide international air service.

Economic Development

Afghanistan embarked on a modest economic development program in the 1930s. The government established banks; introduced paper money; established a university; expanded primary, secondary, and technical schools; and sent students abroad for education. Despite these efforts and Soviet-sponsored literacy campaigns, illiteracy (more than 90%) and lack of technical training remain serious problems.

Although limited financial and human resources have through the years restricted industrial expansion, Afghan governments have, nonetheless, promulgated ambitious development plans since the 1950s. In 1956, the government formulated its first 5-year economic development plan, with another following in March 1962. The Daoudist republican government issued a 7-year plan in 1976, which the Khalqi 5-year plan of 1979 superseded. The PDPA outlined another plan of economic growth in March 1982, which prompted Prime Minister Keshtmand to predict a 6.3% increase in production, based on 63 new Soviet aid projects. By late August

© Soviet source.

School children in Kabul.

1982, however, it was clear that this goal could not be met. The Soviets pledged more than $300 million in new aid in 1984 and disbursed more than $400 million in commodities and new project aid. They signed a further agreement granting additional credits in February 1985. An agreement concluded with the Soviets in August 1985 and approved by the Kabul authorities in May 1986 concerned natural gas exploration, electric power production, road-building, and technical training to take place in Mazar-i-Sharif and Sheberghan.

Much of the Soviet Union's largesse is actually designed to support the military effort, particularly aid-financed expenditures for the transportation infrastructure. In addition, a substantial portion of the commodity credits appear to be for war-related materiel—such as trucks or petroleum—for the Afghan Armed Forces.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Afghanistan traditionally has pursued a policy of neutrality and nonalignment in its foreign relations. In international forums, Afghanistan generally has followed the voting patterns of Asian and African nonaligned countries, while in other spheres attempting to strike a balance between Eastern and Western powers. Following the Marxist coup of April 1978, the Taraki government developed significantly warmer ties with the Soviet Union and its communist satellites, whom the Afghan leader believed to be the "natural allies" of nonaligned nations.

Since the December 1979 invasion, Afghanistan's foreign policy has mirrored that of the Soviet Union. Afghan foreign policymakers have attempted, with little success, to increase their regime's low standing in the noncommunist world. Although most Western countries, including the United States, maintain small diplomatic missions in Kabul, official contact occurs only with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Office of Protocol on necessary administrative and consular matters. Kabul regime embassies in Western countries are allowed only limited official contact with host governments as well. The U.S. Embassy in Kabul serves as a valuable listening post in a country cut off from easy access by the Western media.

Pakistan

Two issues—Pushtunistan and Baluchistan—have long complicated Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan. These controversies date back to the establishment of the Durand Line in 1893, which was, in effect, a line dividing territory inhabited by the various Pathan tribes. A portion of this territory became part of Afghanistan. The remainder went to British India and ultimately Pakistan when the British withdrew in 1947.

Afghanistan protested vigorously against the inclusion of Baluch and Pushtun areas within Pakistan without providing the inhabitants an opportunity for self-determination. Since 1947, this problem has led to incidents along the frontier and, at times, to closure of the border with extensive dislocation of normal trade patterns. The most serious crisis lasted from September 1961 to June 1963, when diplomatic, trade, transit, and consular relations between the countries were suspended. Another deterioration in Afghan-Pakistani relations occurred after Daoud's return to power in 1973. Tensions eased, however, when President Daoud and Prime Minister Bhutto of Pakistan exchanged visits during the summer of 1976.

The Marxist coup again strained relations between the two countries. Since the Soviet invasion, Pakistan has refused to recognize the Kabul regime or to deal with it directly. Pakistan also has taken the lead diplomatically in the United Nations, the Nonaligned Movement, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference in opposing the Soviet occupation.

Pakistan has provided refuge to millions of Afghans fleeing their Marxist-ruled state since April 1978. With help from UN agencies, private groups, and many friendly countries, Pakistan now shelters and provides for over 2 million Afghan refugees. Most live in the Northwest Frontier Province in over 300 refugee camps with their Pathan kinsmen.

UN Efforts

Under Pakistani leadership, the UN General Assembly has passed overwhelmingly seven resolutions on the situation in Afghanistan, calling for a negotiated settlement based on four principles:

- The complete withdrawal of Soviet troops;
- Self-determination for the Afghan people;
- The independent and nonaligned status of Afghanistan; and
- The return of the refugees with safety and honor.

The UN Secretary General's personal representative is seeking a negotiated settlement of the war in a series of proximity talks in Geneva with

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Pakistan and Afghanistan which have reportedly achieved progress on all issues except a timetable for Soviet withdrawal. The United States has publicly agreed to serve in an appropriate guarantor's role as part of a negotiated settlement which provides for the complete withdrawal of Soviet forces within a fixed and reasonable period and effectively links withdrawal to the other elements of an agreement.

Communist Countries

Afghanistan's relations with its northern neighbor, Russia, became more cordial after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The Soviet Union was the first country to establish diplomatic relations with Afghanistan after the third Anglo-Afghan war, a development followed by the signing of an Afghan-Soviet nonaggression pact in 1921, which also provided for Afghan transit rights through the Soviet Union. Soviet assistance also included financial aid, and, in addition, over a dozen aircraft and attendant technical personnel and a number of telegraph operators.

The Soviets began a major economic assistance program in Afghanistan in the 1950s. Between 1954 and 1978, the Afghans received over $1 billion in Soviet aid, and even before the 1979 invasion, substantial Soviet military assistance. In 1973, the two countries announced a $200 million assistance agreement which focused on gas and oil development, trade, transport, irrigation, and factory construction. Since the 1979 invasion, the Soviets have been obliged to augment their large aid commitments to shore up the Afghan economy and rebuild the Afghan military. They gave the Babrak Karmal regime an unprecedented $800 million, one-half on a grant basis. Other notable agreements include:

- A 5-year trade agreement (1981-85), designed to triple trade over the 500 million ruble level of 1980;
- An agreement to proceed with transportation and servicing facilities that will be used to supply Soviet troops; and
- An agreement signed in May 1986 to foster natural gas exploration, electrical power development, and technical training.

The Soviets have continued to work on oil and gas development, the $500 million Aimak copper complex, and agricultural development and processing projects.

Czechoslovakia, Poland, North Korea, Bulgaria, and China maintained diplomatic missions in Afghanistan before the April 1978 coup. Since then, Cuba, the German Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Vietnam, Libya, Yugoslavia, and Hungary have also opened missions in Kabul. Czechoslovakia granted a limited amount of technical and military aid, and a number of Afghan students studied in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Bulgaria before the communist takeover. Since 1979, the East European states have supported Soviet aims by extending $170 million in credits to finance agriculture and industry. The Czechoslovaks agreed to refurbish the U.S.-built Helmand Valley irrigation project; the Bulgarians worked on agriculture and processing projects; and the German Democratic Republic delivered communications and power equipment.

Iran

Afghanistan's relations with Iran have fluctuated over the years, with periodic disputes over the water rights of the Helmand River proving to be the main issue of contention. Since the Soviet invasion, which Iran opposes, relations have been strained. The Iranian consulate in Herat remains closed, as does the Afghan consulate in Mashhad. Moreover, the Iranians have continued to complain of periodic border violations since 1979 while, in 1985, they encouraged Afghan Shi'as to stop fighting among themselves and concentrate their fire on the invaders.

U.S.-AFGHAN RELATIONS

U.S.-Afghan relations were cordial after the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1934. The U.S. policy of helping developing nations raise their standard of living was an important factor in both the maintenance and the improvement of U.S.-Afghan ties. After the U.S. foreign aid program began in 1950, the United States provided Afghanistan with more than $500 million in loans, grants, and surplus agricultural commodities to develop transportation facilities, increase agricultural production, expand the educational system, stimulate industry, and improve government administration.

In the 1950s, the U.S. assistance program focused on the development of Afghanistan's economic infrastructure—roads, dams, and powerplants. Later U.S. aid shifted from infrastructure projects to technical assistance programs to help the Afghan people develop the skills needed to build a modern economy.

The Peace Corps was also active in Afghanistan. Its program began in 1962 with nine volunteers, and, by early 1978, there were more than 100. The program was withdrawn in April 1979.

After the April 1978 coup, relations cooled considerably. They deteriorated further after the February 1979 abduction and murder of U.S. Ambassador Adolph Dubs. The circumstances of this incident—Dubs died after Afghan security forces burst in on his kidnapers—influenced the U.S. decision to reduce bilateral assistance to ongoing projects and to terminate a small military training program. The United States immediately ended all remaining assistance agreements after the Soviet invasion.

The United States strongly opposes the Soviet invasion and continued occupation of Afghanistan. U.S. policy seeks the total withdrawal of Soviet troops through a negotiated settlement, which also will provide for other essential requirements dealt with in seven UN General Assembly resolutions on Afghanistan. Since the Soviet invasion, the United States has supported Pakistan's diplomatic efforts, especially in the General Assembly, to achieve this end. In addition, generous U.S. contributions to the refugee program in Pakistan—which total more than $491 million through April 1986—have played a major part in efforts to assist Afghans in need.

U.S. efforts also include helping Afghans living inside Afghanistan. This cross-border humanitarian assistance program increases Afghan self-sufficiency, thereby helping the Afghans resist Soviet attempts to drive civilians out of the resistance-dominated countryside. In this way, it helps the resistance movement strengthen its base of support inside the country by discouraging the outflow of refugees.

The United States has never recognized the Kabul regime; the limited U.S. diplomatic presence in Kabul does not imply recognition or approval. Official contact with the Kabul authorities is limited to necessary administrative and consular business.

Principal U.S. Officials

Charge d'Affaires—James M. Ealum
Deputy Chief of Mission—Ed McWilliams
Administrative Officer—Edward T. Paukert

The U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan is located on Ansari Wat in the District of Wazir Akbarkhan Mena, Kabul (tel. 24231 through 24239). ■